

Application No. 10/601,007

Filed: June 20, 2003

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TC Art Unit: 1797

CENTRAL FAX CENTER Information No.: 5771

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IN THE CLAIMS

Please **amend** claims 7, 9, 11, and 29 as shown in the Status of the Claims section, infra. No new matter has been added. Additions are underlined and deletions are struckthrough or enclosed between double brackets.

-4-

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Application No. 10/601,007

Filed: June 20, 2003

TC Art Unit: 1797

Confirmation No.: 5771

STATUS OF THE CLAIMS

1-6. (Canceled)

7. (Currently amended) A method for sterilizing a surface of a packaging material by using a high voltage pulse power source, comprising a power source for generating high voltage, a high voltage electrode to which the high voltage generated by said power source is applied, and a ground side electrode arranged so as to be opposed to the discharge side of the high voltage electrode, in which the packaging material to be sterilized is placed between both electrodes under normal temperature and normal pressure, and is sterilized by applying high voltage pulses in a gas atmosphere, characterized in that the surface of the packing materials to be sterilized is placed so as to be opposed to the discharge side of the high voltage electrode, and water or an aqueous solution is disposed onto said surface of the packaging material to be sterilized before discharge, ~~during discharge, or before and during discharge.~~

8. (Original) The sterilization method as claimed in claim 7, characterized in that said water or aqueous solution is given to said packaging material so as to cloud the surface of said packaging material.

9. (Currently amended) The sterilization method as claimed in claim 7, characterized in that said gas is at least one kind of gas selected from a group of oxygen, nitrogen, hydrogen, carbon

Application No. 10/601,007

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TC Art Unit: 1797

Confirmation No.: 5771

dioxide, air, argon, and helium, and the gas is humidified with said water or aqueous solution and introduced before discharge, ~~during discharge, or before and during discharge.~~

10. (Previously presented) The sterilization method as claimed in claim 7, characterized in that said high voltage electrode is provided with unevenness having continuous projections on the discharge side surface of said high voltage electrode.

11. (Currently amended) The sterilization method as claimed in claim 10[[7]], characterized in that said unevenness on the discharge side surface is formed into a helical form.

12. (Previously presented) The sterilization method as claimed in claim 7, characterized in that said packaging material is a container or a film.

13. (Previously presented) The sterilization method as claimed in claim 7, characterized in that said packaging material is a container, and the high voltage electrode is inserted in the container.

14-28. (Canceled)

29. (Currently amended) The sterilization method as claimed in claim 8, characterized in that said gas is at least one kind of

Application No. 10/601,007

Filed: June 20, 2003

TC Art Unit: 1797

Confirmation No.: 5771

gas selected from a group of oxygen, nitrogen, hydrogen, carbon dioxide, air, argon, and helium, and the gas is humidified with said water or aqueous solution and introduced before discharge, ~~during discharge, or before and during discharge.~~

30-32. (Canceled)

33. (Previously presented) The sterilization method as claimed in claim 29, characterized in that:

said high voltage electrode is provided with unevenness having continuous projections on the discharge side surface of said high voltage electrode;

said unevenness on the discharge side surface is formed into a helical form;

said packaging material is a container or a film;

said packaging material is a container, and the high voltage electrode is inserted in the container.

34-35. (Canceled)